

TOWN OF YORKTOWN PLANNING BOARD

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To: Town Board
From: Planning Board
Date: April 30, 2025
Subject: Town Board Referral – Chapter 300
Solar Power Generation Systems and Facilities

At its meeting of April 21, 2025, the Planning Board discussed the subject referral. The Board believes that electrical infrastructure, like all infrastructure, is important and necessary to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public. The Planning Board respectfully submits that in light of recent events surrounding the supply, demand, and cost of electricity, that it may be in the Town's best interest to provide for alternative electricity production. The Board therefore recommends against banning large-scale solar power generation systems and facilities from all residential zones.

The Board wishes to respectfully point out that thus far, its approvals of large-scale solar installations do not exhibit a significant set of failures. Six large-scale solar installations have been approved by the Board. Of these, three are on active farms in residential zones, which was supported because there were less trees to be removed from these sites. One of these is potentially visible from Yorktown's trail system and one is visible from neighboring properties and a well-travelled State Road. The third is largely internal to itself.

A fourth installation was constructed on an inactive farm which abuts commercial uses on 3 sides and the Con Edison right-of-way. While currently visible from certain points, two facts must be addressed:

1. The site's visibility is from commercial areas in which it is expected to remain an allowable use. This renders the visual impact no less significant or undesirable than installations that can yet be developed on abutting commercial properties.
2. The buffer screening has only been installed for one season and has therefore not yet matured.

A fifth installation was constructed on residential property on less acreage than was previously reviewed for a residential subdivision and, as of the date of this memo, the required buffer screening has not yet been installed. In addition, a conservation restriction was placed on 6 acres of the property between the Mohegan Outlet and Lockwood Road to remain in its natural state for at least the life of the solar installation. The sixth installation is located at the IBM property and would still be allowed.

The Board therefore does not feel large-scale solar installations should be banned from residential zones because every site is unique and measures are in place and can be strengthened to protect residents from perceived negative impacts.

Respectfully submitted,


Ian Richey
Assistant Planner